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BRIT

# PUNCH



OCTOBER  
27  
1943

Vol. CCV  
No. 5360

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see bottom of last page of text



## Imperial Typewriters

MADE IN  
GREAT BRITAIN



BY ROYAL COMMAND



'Take a shop,' said the Prince, and Mr. Marcovitch, who was then making his cigarettes in an obscure room near Piccadilly, knew that their excellence had made him famous. Soon these cigarettes were the choice of every Court in Europe and of every circle whose members cherished the reputation of their taste. To-day Marcovitch Cigarettes are made to the same high standards as won the approval of that Eminent Personage and his friends; they are rolled of the very finest tobacco, for the pleasure of those whose palates appreciate perfection.

*Marcovitch*  
**BLACK AND WHITE**  
cigarettes for Virginia smokers

Flat 15 for 2/3—25 for 3/9  
100 for 15/-

Also **BLACK AND WHITE**  
**SMOKING MIXTURE**



2oz.  
Airtight tin  
5'10

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in their 100th year.



## The 'ROC' in terms of 'Tungum'

Sinbad's Roc, with its diet of monstrous serpents, was a fearsome fowl. This Roc from the 'Tungum Age' is a kindlier creature. Thoroughly domesticated, it is extremely docile and can be easily trained to do many useful tricks. A great favourite with airmen and naval engineers. Bright golden plumage; of no great weight but very robust. Not easily fatigued.



**Tungum** BRAND  
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Resists Corrosion

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FOR Toffee

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here's a bit of luck...



tonight we'll have some  
**Nescafé**

Nescafé is hard to find; under war-time conditions we cannot keep pace with increased popularity; grocers everywhere are rationed on a quota basis. But sometimes you'll be lucky enough to get a tin. And then—what a treat! Nescafé, fragrant and stimulating, dissolves instantly in hot water. No grounds, no mess, no coffee-pot.

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A NESTLÉ'S PRODUCT

N28

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Never again need you be bothered with the old unattractive placket with its row of buttons or other fastenings to spoil the symmetry of the hip line and allow your underwear to peep through. The 'ZWOW' Pocket replaces the placket on all the latest style Gor-ray Skirts. Walk and move around as you will, it cannot gap to show an inch of underwear. Sufficiently large to carry your handkerchief, a lipstick, and maybe a lighter and a packet of cigarettes, it is the smartest, most convenient fashion idea in years. All good fashion houses stock Gor-ray Skirts.

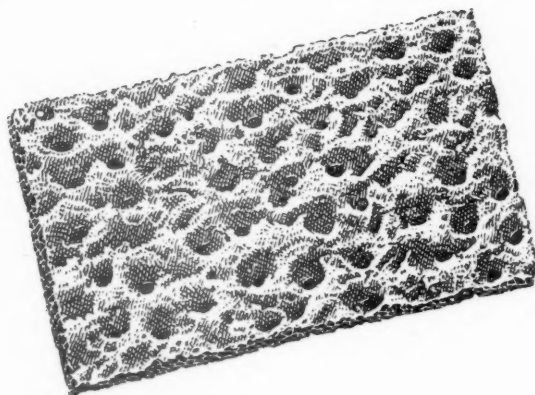
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Make do with  
slice of

ONE

**RYVITA**  
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Ask a soldier what he knows about Lister's, and if in peace-time farming was his job he'll tell you about the engines, coolers and dairy utensils, ploughs and other Lister products that were his before the war. Or he may speak of his country home and the Lister plant which produced the power for the lights, the Lister water pump, the electric heater, the wireless and a score of other purposes. To-day he knows that Lister's are still his trusted friends. He won't give you details, but when he gets home again he'll again specify Listers.

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For over half a century  
STATE EXPRESS 555  
have maintained their  
reputation as the world's  
finest cigarettes.

THE HOUSE OF STATE EXPRESS  
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HAD THE KITCHEN  
REPAINTED EH?  
THE 'SQUANDER BUGS' GOT YOU!

NOT ME. JUST WASHED  
DOWN THE OLD  
BROLAC



"These walls were painted with BROLAC before the war. Luckily, because you can't get BROLAC or MURAC now."

## BROLAC

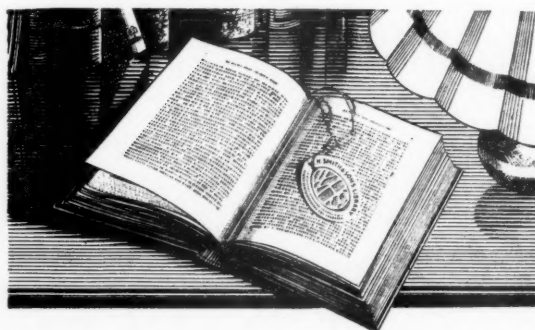
DOUBLE PROTECTION PAINT  
with the enamel finish

## MURAC

MATT FINISH FOR WALLS

JOHN HALL & SONS  
(Bristol & London) Ltd.,  
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\*  
The Strathclyde Paint Co. Ltd.,  
Dalmarock, Glasgow.



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- indigestion
- flatulence
- heartburn
- acidity

**1/6 & 3/10** Including Tax  
Sold by all qualified chemists.

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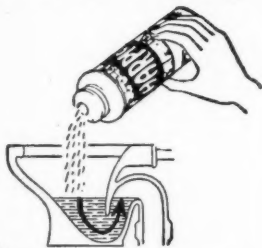
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For over 40 years chemists have been recommending

**Euthymol**  
**TOOTH PASTE**

## How to clean the lavatory



**1** Sprinkle in Harpic, and leave as long as possible. Harpic's cleansing action reaches right round into the S-bend.



**2** Flush the lavatory. The whole bowl is clean and sanitary — the part you don't see, as well.

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**HARPIC**



Leave nothing to chance when you are buying pins. You must have accuracy, finish, quality. We don't say you must have pins made by Stead—but thousands of Organisations think it advisable . . . anyway it's better to be safe "in Stead," but remember Stead make Pins for Industry, not for the home.

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**J. STEAD & CO. LTD. SHEFFIELD 2**

**OPTREX**

*the*

**eye lotion**

**N.B.** only the best is good enough for your eyes

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## Case for the defence!

Supplies for the battle front and the home front travel in packing cases. Cases are valuable and it is up to everyone who handles them or supervises their handling, to see they give the utmost service.

## What do I do...?

I treat all packing cases with great care. I do *not* drop them from lorries.

I open them carefully to preserve the lids. I do *not* close the lids with nails if other methods of fastening can be used.

I put each packing case back into service as quickly as possible and never break up a sound packing case on any account.

Issued by the Ministry of Information  
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## How to Save

**FUEL  
SOAP  
LABOUR**

You need less soap and fuel, your work is easier if you add a few drops of Scrubb's to the water when washing clothes, washing up, and washing floors, etc.

*Every Cleaning need in one bottle of*

**SCRUBB'S  
CLOUDY AMMONIA**  
PER 1/6 BOTTLE



## What can I send him for Christmas?

### THESE SUGGESTIONS MAY HELP

- |                             |                             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Diary</i>             | 6. <i>Hair Cream</i>        | 11. <i>Boot Polish</i>          |
| 2. <i>Stationery</i>        | 7. <i>Brush or Comb</i>     | 12. <i>Fountain Pen</i>         |
| 3. <i>Sock Suspenders</i>   | 8. <i>Socks</i>             | <i>or Pencil</i>                |
| 4. <i>Handkerchiefs (2)</i> | 9. <i>Books (especially</i> | 13. <i>Pullover (8 coupons)</i> |
| <i>(1 coupon)</i>           | <i>crossword)</i>           | 14. <i>Cigarette Lighter</i>    |
| 5. <i>Braces or Belt</i>    | 10. <i>Toothpaste</i>       | 15. <i>Razor</i>                |
|                             |                             | 16. <i>A good toilet soap</i>   |

and he will be very grateful for

### SPORT BRUSHLESS SHAVING CREAM

He may not always get Sport. But you can send him some to give him a smooth, swift shave with no soreness afterwards. No brush or water needed with Sport! That's a great boon to a man on service. And he needs it more than ever when his skin is tender through exposure to all weathers. Why not send him 3 jars? Then he'll think of you gratefully every morning for a long time to come!



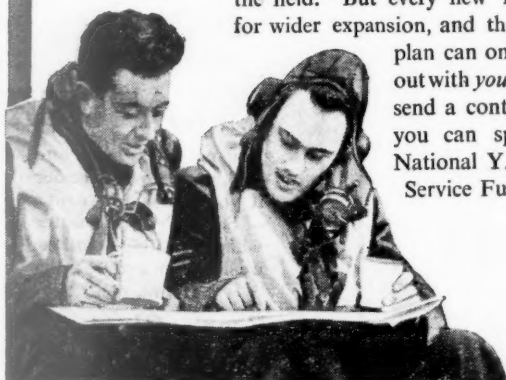
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THE NATIONAL Y.M.C.A. WAR SERVICE FUND  
(Registered under the War Charities Act, 1940)

President: The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Athlone, K.G., G.C.B.  
Vice-President: The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of London (Sir Samuel Joseph).  
112, Gt. Russell Street, London, W.C.1, or 10, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, 12

I am glad to contribute £                      to the National Y.M.C.A. War Service Fund.

Name (and Title) \_\_\_\_\_

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Kindly pin this coupon to your cheque or P.O. Every contribution will be acknowledged.



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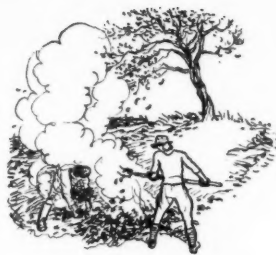
## "HIS MASTER'S VOICE"

RADIO RECEIVERS—RADIO-GRAMOPHONES

We regret that no Radiograms and only very few Radio Receivers are available for the time being.

Something to look forward to!





# PUNCH

OR

*The London Charivari*



Vol. CCV No. 5360

October 27 1943

## Charivaria

So many small countries are now putting up a stiff diplomatic front towards the Axis that speculation is rife as to which will be the last neutral out of neutrality.

An astrologer says that everything he has predicted has come true. Greatly encouraged, he is now hard at work predicting some space for himself in a Sunday paper.



Germany announces the presence of armed looters in Rome. Besides all those she has to maintain in Russia and the occupied countries.

Householders are reminded that in the event of water-pipes bursting in war-time they cannot expect a plumber to be on the spot immediately, just as they didn't in peace-time.

"In case you are looking forward to to-morrow this week's composer will be Brahms."—Radio Announcement.  
When you say that—smile.

"Coal and iron ore from the Donetz have been written off," admits a Nazi newspaper. Apparently our enemies still have plenty of mobile columns in their account books.

The Fuehrer has summoned the leaders of all the satellite nations for an important round-the-table monologue.

We understand that among the many post-war problems now being considered is that of the unemployed neutral observer.

Hitler has been criticizing the description of Mussolini as the war's greatest failure. In all things the Fuehrer must come first.



A Norwegian Quisling was recently fired at when visiting Munich. It seems the people wanted him to feel at home.

"Mr. F. Merritt, Albany-road, Camberwell, has a tame tench that rises to the surface of a tank when he calls 'Come on, laddie.'"  
*Evening News.*

Doesn't scare us.

At the time of writing it seems very unlikely that Mussolini will ever return to Rome. The only decent thing to do in the circumstances is to forward his balcony on to him.

A neutral paper says that among Old Masters looted from Rome by the Germans was a forgery. We hope Ribbentrop gets it.



Italy knows, says a military writer, just who are her friends and who are her enemies. She must have a wonderful card-index system.

Five U.S. Senators have been criticizing the Allied war effort. We understand they have presented the President with a plan for a Fifth Front, of which each of them will be one-fifth.

There will be more tension than ever between Goering and Goebbels now that the *Luftwaffe* has poached on the preserves of the Propaganda Ministry by producing artificial fog.

The end of the war *must* be in sight. A shop assistant was recently heard to say "Sorry, but we are temporarily out of stock," instead of sneering.



## Lunch in Soho

"IT's a dead snip for a fellow like you. You have a very long reach. You wave your hand, as it were, carelessly behind you, taking your aim by the mirror opposite, and judging the distance precisely. One hard tug, and the thing is lying here on the table in front of us with the *hors d'oeuvres*."

"But I don't even *know* it's false."

"False as a woman's love. Notice that it doesn't begin high up on the face, it just suddenly sticks out, black as a boot-brush, and hardly even wagging in time with the motion of the jaws."

"Well, say I do it, and so what?"

"A secret agent is unmasked."

"How do you know he's a secret agent?"

"The days are long past when spies looked like harmless insignificant little men, who would pass unrecognized anywhere. That aroused far too much suspicion. Harmless insignificant little men began to be arrested at sight everywhere. Now they go about looking as much like spies as possible. Here is a man, just behind you, foreign, sinister-looking, black-bearded, sitting all alone watching everyone who comes in. An A-1 intelligence like mine can immediately detect the double ruse. But you will get all the credit for it. Promotion follows instantly. Or you may be in the Honours List. *For services rendered to His Majesty's Government*. Privately thanked by Herbert Morrison himself. You might be allowed to keep the beard, and show it to your grand-children. And it's all so easily, so swiftly done. You remember those lines of Tennyson's

*Beard in the crannied chin  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, roots and all in my hand  
Little beard, but if I could understand  
What you are, roots and all, and how stuck in—"*

"Do shut up. I believe he's an Afghan diplomat. Anyhow what do I say if it doesn't come off at all?"

"It could hardly fail. But you can say it was an accidental gesture. Or it reminded you of a beard familiar but lost long ago, say the beard of your headmaster at school."

"I never tried to pull that off."

"No, but you wanted to. Twenty-five years of repression. Surely anyone would excuse a temptation so violent as that."

"Much better to find out whether he really *is* a secret agent. Let's begin talking loudly."

"HAVE YOU HEARD THAT THERE'S BEEN A TREMENDOUS LEAKAGE OF INFORMATION LATELY? That went well. He's looking quite keenly at us. Talk quickly about Germany."

"Suppose the Nazis suddenly offered unconditional surrender. How should we take delivery of the goods?"

"They would hand over to the Army."

"Suppose we refused to trust the Army?"

"They would say 'Very well. Walk in then. We shall offer no opposition.' And I'll tell you what they would do after that."

"He's interested. Go on."

"Every soldier from the High Command downwards would burn his uniform, his identity card, regimental records, everything. The barracks of the Reich would be bonfires. We should walk in, capture guns, tanks, aeroplanes, trucks, ammunition dumps, and find nobody but nameless civilians, all saying they were staunch

democrats, or communists, or whatever the invading armies wanted them to be."

"You could tell a German soldier anywhere by his face."

"NOT IF HE GREW LONG HAIR."

"AND DIDN'T SHAVE."

"WOULD THEY BE BLACK BEARDS?"

"SOME WHITE, SOME BLACK. I daren't look. How's that going?"

"Perfectly. He's all ears. All but his beard, I mean."

"Did you listen to that English broadcast from Germany to Ireland about *Punch*?"

"No, what did they say?"

"They said *Punch* was much worse than it used to be."

"That was fairly original. Why?"

"Because it used to make fun of the lower classes, but in these days of universal Bolshevism it daren't do that; so it hasn't anything to make fun of at all."

"They could have said it tries to make fun of the lowest class in Europe, and the lowest lout in that."

"I don't suppose the people of Eire are very much interested in what *Punch* says at any time. All Irish papers are funnier than *Punch*."

"THEY'RE PROBABLY MORE INTERESTED IN PORTUGAL THAN *PUNCH*. That stung him badly. He's going. Now's your last chance."

"Too late."

"I'm sorry about your promotion."

"It'll come. I don't see what I could have said in any case whether the thing came off or not. There's no law against wearing a false beard that I know of. And there is against assault and battery. He could have said 'So. I summon ze police.'"

"Why 'ze'?"

"Well, 'dee' if you like. Or 'da'. What could I have done?"

"I told you before. 'Beard in the crannied chin.' You could have said you were a Victorian philosopher swaying between religion and materialism, interested in the one and the all. I don't know what you think, but this seems to me to have been a very good lunch. How about some brandy?"

"I doubt it. But I'll try the waiter."

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, you knew of course all the time what was going to happen. Perhaps I ought to have guessed it myself. But it was not until the waiter said that he would go and ask the proprietor that I began to feel really uncomfortable. Nor, on a closer inspection could I see anything really suspicious about the proprietor's beard. But he had no brandy. Or if he had, it was most likely on the secret list.

EVOE.

o o

### "POULTRY

These animals, some of them weighing as much as 800 lb., would quickly help to end the meat shortage in the Peninsula—if they could be got here."—*South African Paper*.

We can imagine.

o o

"The key sentence in the General's statement about the assault on Rabaul, MacArthur has his hands lay my hands upon was pressed into service for that raid. Any expert knows what that means."

*Lancs. Paper.*

So you'd better go and ask one.



**AGAINST THE LIGHT**  
**OR "ZERO" HOUR IN THE PACIFIC**

[Nearly a thousand Japanese aeroplanes have been destroyed during the past month.]



*"I don't really mind him marrying someone else; only it just makes me wild to think I've been wasting the best leaves of my life on the man."*

## *English Islands or Lost off Labrador*

### IV

#### *Thursday or Friday.*

LIFE in Seal Islands continues on its normal course. Every morning we wake and hope that we shall not hear the pitter-patter of rain on the deck. We do hear the pitter-patter of rain on the deck. We still hope then that when we look out we shall see the portcullis of fog lifted from the little entrance of the Punch Bowl; we shall see the outer islands and the Atlantic beyond. We don't. We see the curtain of fog drawn taut across the door. We hear heavy seas boisterous outside the islands. Seven days of an easterly blow will have raised a healthy swell for us, even if the fog does lift. No matter. The Padre goes off to shoot an eiderduck and I sit down to the Future of Newfoundland. On this great theme I have now written 20,000 words. Yesterday I wrote 5,000.

Sometimes I sit in the Dispensary, among the bottles of Acetyl-salicylic Acid. Sometimes I sit in my little cabin. It depends on which is the colder. Sometimes I think it has stopped raining and I go out on deck to do my exercises; but it never has.

I really do not know whether it is Thursday or Friday. Friday, I think. It does not matter much. The only time that matters now in Seal Islands is meal-time. It must be rather like this in Utopia, only they have more meals. If we were sensible we should all stay in bed all the morning.

But we don't. We get up punctually. And we still fuss about the time, because of the wireless.

Many people take the wireless for granted now; but I still think it is rather a remarkable invention. Indeed, I still don't really believe it. I mean I

don't really believe that I am lying fog-bound in the Punch Bowl, Seal Islands, Labrador, and listening to a man who is actually talking at this moment in Langham Place, 2,000 miles away. But I am; and it's a comfort. He is telling us about Sicily; it sounds pretty good. But I have not seen a map of Russia for weeks. I cannot remember where Briansk is; and I am practically out of touch with the Eastern Front.

Time is a big nuisance in the Western Atlantic. It is not too much to say that Time, the Great Orderer, is in a state of chaos; and somebody should do something about it.

It is all—or mainly—this blessed Summer Time. When we first alighted in Newfoundland from that dreary aeroplane which made me deaf and gave me ear-throb, we were told that



Newfoundland Time was normally three and a half hours behind Greenwich Mean Time, but Newfoundland, gallantly following the Motherland, had popped on two hours of Summer Time. Well and good. We set our watches—three and a half hours behind British Summer Time.

But we also heard that outside St. John's, the capital, the people resented the second hour. They were never wildly keen about the first hour, most of them being concerned with Nature—fish, farm, or forest. They said the second hour was put on merely because the citizens of St. John's did not like driving their cars in the black-out—and who were the citizens of St. John's anyway? I may add, with bated breath, that the people of Newfoundland have the same warm affection for their ancient capital as Nova Scotia has for Ottawa or Manchester for London.

What is more, the people of Newfoundland would not *have* the second hour. So in the first "out-port" we visited we found that the clocks and watches were one hour on only—that is, four and a half hours behind British Summer Time. Well and good. We sympathized a little; two hours is too much in a country where you have high tea at 5.30 or 6.0: the day never ends. And there is no black-out outside St. John's. But it was not our quarrel. We put our watches *back* one hour.

But it was not to be so simple as that. Everywhere there is a magistrate—a Government official who met and mothered us and made our arrangements and appointments: and there is (here and there) a railway, and some steamers, both belonging to the Government. And these, including the magistrate, all keep *Government* time.

So in that one small place—and in nearly all the other places—we had to deal with two different times—Government Time and what I may call Local Rebel Time. The magistrate arranged for us to lunch with Leading Citizen Smith at 1.30 Government Time, and our host expected us at 12.30 Rebel Time. Sometimes they politely adopted one another's time to make things easier for us, but failed to state which time they were using. We never entered a new place, or made a date without inquiring "What time do you use?"

I do not know whether I made things any easier by going back to Greenwich Mean Time after a few days of this. "If every one is going to have his own time"—I said—"why not me?" And there is a lot to be said for

it. I, at least, never had to alter my watch again; and I did no more sums than the others.

I remember vividly one awful day. It began by the magistrate coming to take us away at 9.0 when we thought he meant 10, and George was still at his second egg. Then, after sitting round a Union Jack and making speeches, we went to lunch with the Canadian Commanding Officer, one Colonel Mackenzie, and his officers in the Mess.

### The Merchant Navy Men

THEY know no ease, the  
Merchant Navy men,  
Not home, with the good day  
done,  
But the high gale and the steep  
sea,

The searing of cold and of sun;  
Voyage end, and voyage begun.

They may not rest; they wait in  
the dusk, the dawn,  
The flash and the tearing of steel,  
The ice-wrap of the cold wave,  
The cinders of thirst in the throat  
And madness that sits in the boat.

They know no help, they see  
these things alone;  
No uniform, linking in pride,  
Nor the hard hand and the  
straight brace  
Of discipline holding upright,  
But their own soul in the night.

They claim no gain, the Merchant  
Navy men;  
A wage, and the lot of the sea,  
The job done, and their fair name,  
And peace at the end of their way.  
They give; must we not repay?

Punch Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie  
Street, E.C.4

We arrived punctually at one o'clock Local Time, two o'clock Newfoundland Government Time, 1730 British Summer Time and 1530 Greenwich Mean Time. (I am not sure about Atlantic Daylight Time, or Eastern War-Time.)

An officer met us and gave us a wash—and a sherry: and introduced us to his Colonel. But all seemed rather awkward and vague: and nobody seemed to know exactly why we were there. Colonel Mackenzie, to my surprise, spoke with a strong French accent; and when I asked him to sing "O Canada," he sang it, charmingly, in French.

We then discovered that Colonel Mackenzie had expected us at one

o'clock Newfoundland Government Time, twelve o'clock Rebel Time, 1630 British Summer Time, and 1430 Greenwich Mean Time. We did not turn up—the Colonel assumed we were not coming and went about his duties. The French Canadian Colonel who entertained us had not the faintest idea who the three British Members of Parliament were, or why they had come. Our apologies to both.

But let this be a warning to all who try to run two times in one town.

In Labrador we ran into two new times. At North West River they ignored the whole thing and kept Newfoundland Standard Time—no Summer Time at all. At Goose Bay, twenty miles away, the Canadian Air Force kept Atlantic Daylight Time—and at the moment I forget just what that is.

I did not care. I stuck to dear old Greenwich. It is great to see my little watch in time with Big Ben when we hear him on the wireless. It is good to wake up and see in a panic that it is 10.30, and realize later that it is only eight o'clock. It is good the other way round when one begins to think one is staying up too late.

And why should not everybody do the same? I mean—*everybody*. No Summer Time, no local time—just Greenwich Mean Time. They do it in the air already. The navigators, of course, must still play about with local mean time, to get their longitude, but why should the ordinary citizen? Noon in Newfoundland is now at 1400 (two o'clock) Government Time. It might just as well be at 1530 (half-past three) Greenwich Time (as astronomically it is, or nearly). Noon at New York would be about 1700. Why not? The sun would be in the usual place, and that is what matters. If the Governments want people to get up earlier, let them say so—and stop monkeying with the clocks.

The great thing would be that everybody would always know what the time was, everywhere. Now, nobody does.

It is still raining—all the time.

A. P. H.

### Impending Apology

"A single man, he was born at C—  
and came of an old and well-worn C—  
family."—*Southern Paper*.

### White Cargo

"It is of course impossible for an incident officer to be attached to every bomb dropped."—*Civil Defence Lecture*.

## At the Pictures

## HOW LIKE?

WHETHER it is necessarily true that presentation on the films (or on the air) of the average, the ordinary, and the typical is particularly welcome, is a question; but certainly film-makers (and the B.B.C.) seem to think it is. The latest lyrically-advertised offering to base its appeal on being about "ordinary people" is the British film *Millions Like Us* (Directors: FRANK LAUNDER and SIDNEY GILLIAT), which is very much better than a natural distrust of such consciously "everyday" stories had led me to expect. "Millions like you," say the credit titles, are in the cast, as well as the more experienced and exceedingly good players who take the principal parts. The story begins with a family—one of those families that are in fact no more typical than the "absolutely normal" human being—setting off for its seaside holiday in the summer just before the war. Father, of course, is mainly comic, with a touch of pathos when his favourite daughter leaves him; daughters are The Young Matron (a bit unsympathetic), The Flighty Piece (always after the boys—good for a laugh at nearly every appearance), and The Quiet One (the heroine, of course). This heroine is played by PATRICIA ROC, and we follow her fortunes when she goes to work, during the war, in an aircraft factory. She meets and marries a shy R.A.F. Sergeant-Air-Gunner (GORDON JACKSON) and he is killed; the film takes this personal tragedy in its stride, and its general impression remains consciously, kindly, Englishly humorous and "warm"—a description that would usually have for me a more or less uncomplimentary significance. Nevertheless the picture is good, and I enjoyed it, because it is well made, with ingenious touches

that are not too tricky. An acceptable addition, for instance, to the film shorthand symbols for "war breaks out" is this: a quick shot of a small shop-front that we have just seen in

paper notice: "No Black-out Material. No Drawing Pins."

*So Proudly We Hail!* (Director: MARK SANDRICH), begins with the arrival in Australia of the eight surviving U.S. Army nurses from Bataan and Corregidor; the story is told in the flash-back manner, two of them narrating in turn. Three of the nurses stand out, of course, from the others, for they are played by CLAUDETTE COLBERT, PAULETTE GODDARD and VERONICA LAKE. The last of these three is not one of the survivors; but for the others all ends reasonably well after much heroic behaviour under fire during those violent rear-guard actions in the Philippines. Perhaps we have seen too many film horrors of war, but the fact remains that the most memorable thing for me in this picture is the comparatively unimportant performance of SONNY TUFTS as an awkward, beaming ex-football-star Marine.

The Russian film *Lone White Sail* (Director: VLADIMIR LEGOSHIN) is a period piece: the time is 1905, after the mutiny on the battleship *Potemkin*. At Constanza one of the sailors gets on to a pleasure-steamer bound for Odessa, and *Pyota*, the little son of a schoolmaster,

watches with intense interest and excitement the pursuit of him through the holiday crowds on board by a bald, ogreish plain-clothes detective. The sailor escapes by jumping overboard, and is picked up by an old fisherman and his grandson *Gavrik*, a friend of *Pyota's*. Later the two boys, not exactly knowing what they are doing, help the rebels in a town battle with the soldiers by carrying ammunition to them. The whole thing is admirably done, amusing, exciting, full of well-designed scenes and attractive camera-work, and with that open-air, genuine sort of atmosphere one gets so often in Russian pictures and so seldom anywhere else. I enjoyed it. R. M.



J.H.DOWD

[Millions Like Us]

## OUTPUT

Celia . . . . . PATRICIA ROC  
Sergt. Fred Blake . . . . . GORDON JACKSON

peace-time conditions, with the addition of the forlorn and tattered little



J.H.D.

[So Proudly We Hail!]

## ANGELS OF MERCY RELAX

Olivia . . . . . VERONICA LAKE  
Joan . . . . . PAULETTE GODDARD



*"I gather that nothing very much happened anywhere round here during the blitz."*

## Looking Forward

**I**T is right that we should begin to look forward to being able to look forward to the beginning of looking forward to the end of the war.

What will the end of the war, should we live to see it, mean? Let us have no illusions. It will mean the complete exhaustion of every continent, every country, and every individual on the face of the globe. (Possibly it may be extra-global. We do not know about Mars.) Out of that exhaustion we must create an entirely new world. Plans for reconstruction are already in hand. Far-reaching prohibitions, inhibitions and re-conditions are drawn up and ready to be put into execution. (N.B. —It will be of no use to say that you prefer execution.)

It would be wishful thinking of the most destructive kind to allow ourselves or anybody else to suppose for a split fraction of a second that *controls* will be anything but multiplied, intensified, magnified, and not improbably leading to suicide. Queues will be longer, and there will be many more of them, and rations will react in the opposite direction so that they will be shorter, and there will be fewer of them.

There will be more taxes, fewer taxis, more women, and absolutely no domestic service. Allowances will have to be made for families, as they always have been only more so, because all families will have got completely out of hand.

Demobilization and decentralization will be subjects for interrogations. (Do nothing about either of these until you are told what to do, and do not expect to be told until the end of the Hundred Years' Plan, which you haven't yet been told about at all.)

England, America, Russia and China will be in every respect *basic*. This leaves out a good many other countries, and informal talks on the subject, or subjects, of these will take place in Woolloomooloo, Santa Barbara, Staffa (though not Iona), and the Arctic Regions. It is still hoped that Marshal Stalin will be amongst those present. It would be utterly disastrous to suggest that peace, should it ever come, will bring with it anything suggestive of plenty, except in so far as Reports, Recommendations, Investigations and Organizations are concerned. Of these there are, and will be, plenty. The same applies to Housing Schemes,

Taxation, and Rural and Civic Planning.

It is necessary to bear in mind that the whole of the post-war world will look to the British Empire for guidance especially in such questions as the zoning of fish, the school-leaving age and double summer-time, and we must therefore ask ourselves what the whole of the post-war world will see, when it looks—or even whether it will see anything at all.

Having asked ourselves, we can turn to other problems without attempting to answer ourselves.

The black-out regulations will go on for years and years.

The petrol restrictions will not go on at all because there will be no petrol available for restrictions.

The Home Guard will probably be allowed to die of old age, the Women's Organizations of overwork, and the Youth Movements of their own accord.

The war should therefore be looked upon as a training-ground for the severities of the peace, and it will be absolutely essential, or *basic*, to decide once and for all what the difference is between Buna and Guna and which would you sooner.

E. M. D.





"Would you mind giving this to the conductor for a 1<sup>st</sup> class fare, and tell him I was sorry I didn't have anything smaller."

## Entertainments

**W**ITHOUT entertainment of any kind the world would no doubt be a dull place. I say "no doubt" because it is fairly obvious that before entertainment of any kind existed, in other words when there was a chance of judging if the world was a dull place or not, humanity must have decided that it was or it would never have gone to the lengths of inventing some of the entertainments it did invent; such as conjurers. Conjurers being, indeed, the epitome of deliberate entertainment, if not the root of the whole trouble, I cannot do better than start with a few words on conjuring.

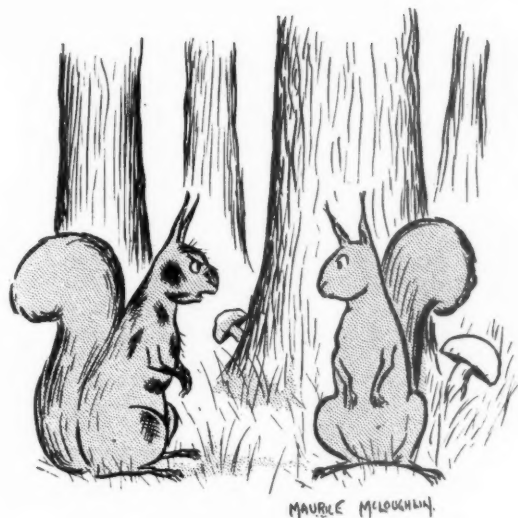
Conjuring is an interesting process fraught with psychology. For years psychologists have been falling over one another in their eagerness to explain that conjuring reveals the fundamental gullibility of human nature, and that human nature is deceived by the average conjurer not because the average conjurer is deceiving it but because, at that particular moment, it was not noticing what was happening. All this is true, but there is another side to it. Conjuring owes a large part of its hold on the public to the fact that it deals with the incongruous. No one in real life, not even in peace-time, would keep an egg in an opera hat; just as no one would carry a dust-pan and a roller towel along a quiet country road, which makes it so fascinating that people do. But there is yet another side to conjuring, and it is the most interesting of all, and that is the mental process which goes to make a conjurer. Conjurers, it is safe to say, are the sort of people who like to have other people watching them and

listening to them. In this they are no different from anyone else. What singles them out is that they realized early in life that it was not going to be easy. Thus it is that psychologists who take conjurers into account as *human beings* say they are glad they have, because it throws a new light on human nature's inherent egocentricity all round.

The only other thing I want to say about conjuring is that, being an entertainment, it is usually watched from rows of chairs, and that when a conjurer invites someone from the audience to come up on the stage there is, besides the usual communal mental crisis before anyone does go up on the stage, the usual excitement when it happens; people who have got on a stage by accident being even more exciting than a dust-pan and a roller towel in a quiet country road; with, psychologists say, the added excitement of the subconscious going right back and thinking that it is Prize-giving Day at School. (I must add here that psychologists could not at first work out why people should be subconsciously so pleased at someone else getting a prize, until they, the psychologists, thought a bit further and realized that what the subconscious is really thinking is that it is the last day of term.)

I have dwelt at some length on conjuring because it really goes for almost all branches of entertainment watched from rows of chairs. Now I want to say something about rows of chairs, I mean amateur, or emergency ones. The interesting thing about emergency rows of chairs is that the floor beneath does not, as in a professional cinema or theatre, slope up towards the back, so that those in the back row cannot see enough of what is going on. To make up for this, those in the front row can see too much; they can see, if they are watching a play, things happening round the play but not in it, like ladders, and people putting coloured slides over electric lights, and other people sitting reading. It remains for the audience in the middle rows to strike an average, which it does by seeing half an entertainment to the right of the head of the person in front, and the other half to the left. While I am talking about plays I must point out that every play stops at least twice in its course for at least ten minutes. The audience is directly responsible for this, and psychologists look at it this way. People watching a play are of two types: those who take no notice of those they are watching it with; and those who like to share the funny bits by laughing sideways instead of straight out in front. Those who do not like to share the funny bits find, if they are normally decent, that they accumulate a sense of guilt, a sense that they are spoiling the other person's enjoyment and (so ruthlessly does conscience get to the basic facts) therefore cheating this other person of the equivalent of the cost of the seat. But a ten minutes' interval twice in a play gives them, when asked by the other person if they don't think the play is good, a chance to recoil further within themselves. This puts everyone right with everyone.

Now I come to a totally different kind of entertainment, untraceable to its origin but deeply rooted in human nature. I mean the bazaar, sale of work, or garden fête. A good deal has been said about this sort of thing, but not nearly enough about the reason for its hold on the public mind, which is, psychologists tell us, a mixture of two of the most popular fallacies going—the first that no one behind a counter is real, and the second that no one on a stage is real. Bazaars, sales of work and garden fêtes were created to dispel this illusion. They give the public a chance to see its friends behind counters or on stages, or even to get behind counters or on stages itself. (Even



"That tree we used last year is stored full of coal."

a bran-tub, psychologists tell us, counts for their purposes as a stage.) The result is very satisfactory. People seeing their friends on a stage or behind a counter or getting on a stage or behind a counter themselves—even a kitchen table with a rug pinned round, psychologists tell us, does psychologically for a counter—naturally take the chance of keeping the fallacy up and not thinking that their friends are real, or they themselves for that matter. This puts the whole affair on that plane of slight unreality necessary to spur human nature on to such a concentration of experience as is demanded by the average bazaar, sale of work or garden fête; and, psychologists say, even helps with the rain, because people being rained on at an outdoor sale of work feel dimly that it is not raining because it is raining so much as because they are at an outdoor sale of work.

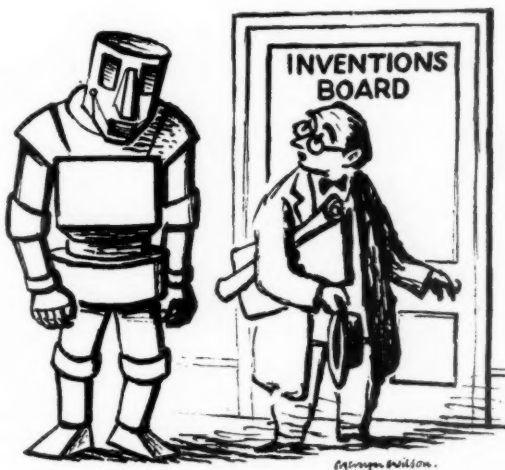
I have not left myself space to say much about perhaps the highest of all forms of entertainment, I mean from the public's point of view; what I can only define as people watching other people mending a road. As entertainment, psychologists are reluctantly forced to admit, it has everything. It is free. No one has to get there because everyone is there already. It goes on for as long as anyone likes to watch it, because it goes on even longer. It has unreality and incongruity to the highest degree, especially when there is a kettle boiling on a brazier. Above all, it stops no one talking. Psychologists had, indeed, begun to come round before the war to the idea that it was ousting conjuring as the epitome of deliberate entertainment; adding, to cheer conjurers up, that probably it has something to do with being roped off from the public.

**W**E are asked to remind you that illustrated papers or periodicals will be very welcome to Land Girls, who have little opportunity for getting them. Please post your unwanted copies to the Hostels Division, Women's Land Army Headquarters, Balcombe Place, Balcombe, Sussex.

## Ulster Enquiry

"I SAY, do you know where we are?"  
 "I can't say I do actually. These maps——"  
 "Yes, I know. I think I had better ask. Excuse me, but can you tell me the way to Knockloughrim?"  
 "I can."  
 "Oh, good, well which way is it?"  
 "Where have you come from?"  
 "Belaghy. Though of course it doesn't really——"  
 "You ought never to have come here."  
 "Oh! But now that we are here, perhaps you could tell us which way we ought to go?"  
 "I could."  
 "Then perhaps you'd be so kind?"  
 "Och, it's no trouble at all, Capt'n."  
 "Well, then——"  
 "Well, now you have come as far as this, you had better just follow the tarmac till you come to the cross. You want to turn off this way at the cross, only when you get there you'll be facing towards this way, so you'll be turning that way."  
 "I see—so we turn to the left."  
 "Well, you might, but when you'll be at the cross, you'll be facing the way that ye're not, so——"  
 "Yes, I understand."  
 "Do you understand now?"  
 "Yes, quite. Where do we go then?"  
 "Well, where would you go but straight on, for there's no other road till you come to a town of houses where there's a road to the left."  
 "We turn left there, do we?"  
 "You do not, for there's a little sort of a road to the right, and you take that one, and follow on it till you come to where the military were, but they're not there now, for that was last year, and there you turn right, and you follow the tarmac till you come to Knockloughrim."  
 "Thank you very much."  
 "Och, it's no trouble at all, Capt'n. But that's not the shortest way."

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.



"Don't forget to call everyone 'Sir'."



*"We have to exercise CONSIDERABLE tact in the change-over."*

### *The Food of Love*

**O** PLEASANT and fair is a musical air  
 When you're feeling dismayed or down-  
 hearted!  
 And deep though my grief beyond hope of relief  
 Now that I and my loved one have parted,  
 My lovesick distress becomes fleetingly less  
 At the sound of a certain refrain:  
 For on hearing a tune on the double bassoon  
 I believe she is with me again.

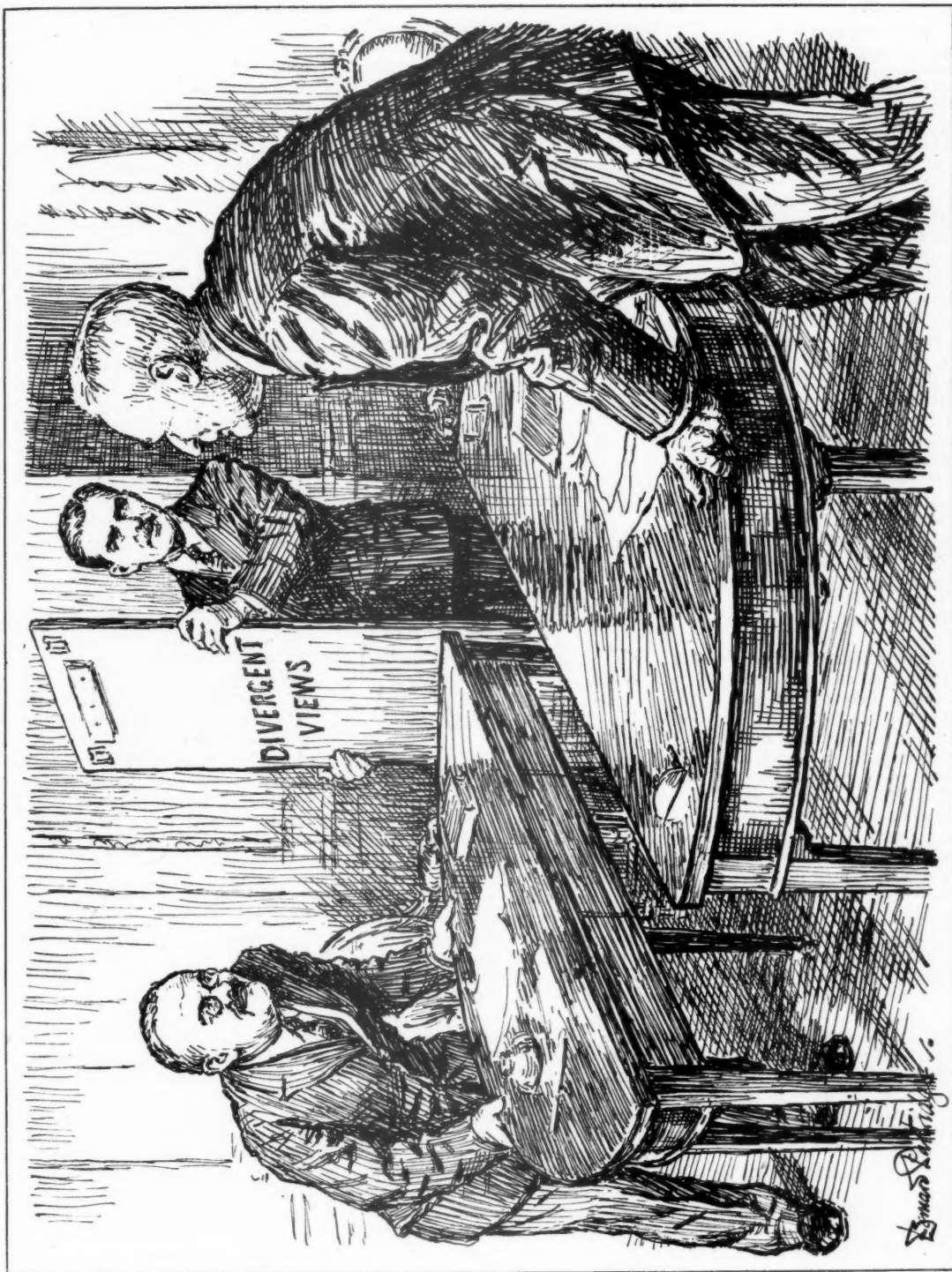
How fine is the tone of the stately trombone,  
 And pleasant the voice of the flute is,  
 How sweet the spinet and the clarionet;  
 But alas! I am deaf to their beauties,

And since the drear day when my love went away  
 There is only one note has its charms—  
 For the sound of a tune on the double bassoon  
 Makes me dream she is safe in my arms.

You may strum me a bar on the Spanish guitar,  
 Play an air on the sombre viola,  
 Or sing me a song upon cymbals and gong,  
 Sound a call on the trumpet, or roll a  
 Tattoo on the drum; to these sounds I am  
 numb—

One alone still entrances my ear:  
 O play me a tune on the double bassoon  
 And I feel my beloved is near!





# THE RUSSIAN ROUND TABLE

"Let's sit closer together."

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, October 19th.—House of Lords:** Swift Business.

House of Commons: Regency Bill, Fireguards, and so on.

**Wednesday, October 20th.—House of Lords:** Winged Business.

House of Commons: More about Pay-as-you-go.

**Thursday, October 21st.—House of Lords:** Nil.

House of Commons: Nothing very much.

**Tuesday, October 19th.**—There comes a tide in the affairs of an M.P., which, taken at the flood, leads on to a resounding score. And the reward for that is a cheer and/or a roar of laughter, either of which is music to any politician's ear.

Sir HERBERT WILLIAMS, who certainly offers many examples of wit from his somewhat cuckoo-like seat on the Opposition Front Bench—seized on the strength of a ruling that any former Minister has a right to do so—took things at the flood to-day. In doing so, he scored off that redoubtable scorer, Lady ("NANCY") ASTOR. 'Twas thus. . .

Somebody was asking Mr. HUGH DALTON, President of the Board of Trade, about children's shoes, and Mr. President said he was keeping a close eye on things, through his special inspector.

So Lady ASTOR, she ups and asks: "Is this inspector a man or a woman? It is *very* important!"

And Mr. DALTON, huffy-like, raps back: "It is *not* very important!"

And Lady ASTOR wants to know: "Don't women know more about children's shoes than men do?"

The House—just then 99.9 per cent. masculine—said "No!" very firmly, and Lady ASTOR replied "Yes!" at least as firmly.

Sir HERBERT, he lie low and say nuffin'.

Then up gets young Mr. WILLIAM ASTOR, Lady ASTOR's son, to ask Mr. DALTON a question about household linen, towels and bedding, to which (as the country newspapers have it) the Minister suitably replied.

Sir HERBERT, he open one eye. Then up he gets.

"Mr. Speaker," says he, all sly, "is it not undesirable that questions about bed-linen and such should be asked by men?"

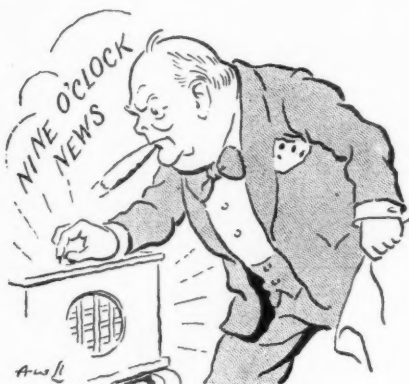
Lady ASTOR, Mr. ASTOR, and the whole House saw the point simultaneously. It had been an unexciting Question-time, and Sir HERBERT got

the biggest "hand" any joker has had for months. Yes, it had been an unexciting Question-time. . .

Your scribe begs to add this to Mr. Punch's Dictionary of Political Definitions: *Very shortly*: The week after next. (Mr. DALTON.)

While this piece of history was being made, Mr. CHURCHILL came in, not looking too pleased. He sat down with a bench-shaking bang that startled the Chief Whip and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who were engaged in an absorbing conversation a foot or two further along the Treasury Bench. Then he got up with a bang, and the House, which knows (most of it) when to keep silent, just kept silent.

In a strangely gruff voice, the P.M. answered half a dozen questions with



"There is no obligation to listen to the nine o'clock news."—Mr. Churchill.

a plain, unadorned (but apparently sufficiently informative) "No!" Half a dozen others he met with the retort that he had nothing to add to what had been said on previous occasions.

Then he sat down again, while the M.P.s who had put down questions seemed to be congratulating themselves that they had had the restraint and wisdom not to ask supplementaries.

To their surprise, they saw Mr. CHURCHILL turn to Brigadier HARVIE WATT, his Parliamentary Private Secretary, and give him the broadest and most affable of grins, together with something awfully like a wink. Then he resumed his grimness, and studied the floor with concentration. Just why he chose this attitude, nobody knew, and nobody inquired. It is usually safer not to.

However, the last traces of anger faded from Mr. CHURCHILL's face as Mr. RICHARD LAW, the Minister of

State, stepped to the Table with the announcement that about 5,000 of our sorely-wounded men who were prisoners of war in German hands were about to return home, having been repatriated, in exchange for some hundreds of German wounded from our prison camps.

This news the House received with a satisfaction it did not try to conceal.

Mr. HERBERT MORRISON moved the Second Reading of the Regency Bill, which will permit PRINCESS ELIZABETH to be a member of any Council of State set up after she reaches her eighteenth birthday. By a queer oversight, a previous Act had laid it down that she could not thus act until she was twenty-one, although she could succeed to the full duties of the Crown when she was eighteen.

It was the keen desire of the KING and QUEEN, said the Home Secretary, that the young Princess should have every chance of gaining experience in the great task that might, one day, fall to her lot. Mr. CAMPBELL STEPHEN, the House felt, put the position happily when he referred to the Princess being "apprenticed to her trade." Of course, the Bill passed without opposition.

For future historians, it should be recorded that that great newspaperman Mr. BRENDAN BRACKEN resorted (to the disappointment of his many friends in the Press Gallery) to that over-worked and frequently under-veracious plea: "I have been misreported."

True, he did it secondhand, through Mr. DALTON, and, true, the alleged misreporting related to the Press of the United States, and one could not help feeling that, had the Minister been present in person, he would have been more original.

In the Lords, their few Lordships met, passed a couple of Orders, listened to a few tabloid speeches, and were out again within ten minutes.

**Wednesday, October 20th.**—Those noble Lords who follow with interest the political career of Lord BEAVERBROOK (and who does not?), must often have nostalgic thoughts of the Centre Court at Wimbledon. He moves from Government Front Bench to Opposition Front Bench so swiftly (and so speedily back) that lookers-on from the Cross-benches must move their heads with Centre Court regularity and rhythm if they are to keep their eyes on his Lordship.

Whichever side of the House he is sitting on, Lord BEAVERBROOK, now



*"I have no hesitation, gentlemen, in describing my new plan for offensive sweeps against the Danes as an absolute piece of cake."*

Lord Privy Seal, is always a great draw, and this afternoon the Benches were crowded to hear him talk about civil aviation. Lord LONDONDERRY, asking that something should be done about it, announced, with an eye on the Lord Privy Seal, that he pinned his faith on that noble lord. He added that if Lord B. or anybody else, wanted to do anything, it was best to have a plan.

Lord BRABAZON was asking for a lot more *planes* when Lord BEAVERBROOK nodded. "I don't know whether a nod can be reported," Lord BRABAZON commented, with an inquiring look at the Official Reporter, "but I hope that nod keeps Dr. GOEBBELS awake!"

Young Lord ST. DAVIDS, in Naval lieutenant's uniform, and wearing a most impressive beard, spoke breezily, demanding an international corporation to run civil flying.

His fellow Peers liked his bluff style, and particularly his use of the expression "mucking about" in relation to the (un-nationalized) state of Britain's railways. This now, presumably, becomes a fully Parliamentary phrase.

There were several other speakers, including Lord ROTHERMERE, who sweetly commented on the fact that Lord BEAVERBROOK, arch-hater and despiser of committees, was now chief of the greatest of them all—on civil flying.

But the House was waiting to hear the Lord Privy Seal, whose tumultuous eloquence seems to fascinate it. He took on all his critics, one by one, casting (as one wit put it) a bit of sugar here, a Mills bomb there, until both subject and critics were exhausted. Lord ROTHERMERE got a whole handful of Millses. Then Lord BEAVERBROOK sat down, having successfully played himself in once more on the Government side. He promised that he would do everything possible to keep Britain's end up in the fight for civil flying—*après la guerre*.

The sitting of the Commons was notable for two pronouncements from Ministers. Captain BALFOUR, of the Air Ministry, said: "The pyjama is admirable, comfortable, and desirable, but *not* essential. As it is not essential, the R.A.F. does not supply it."

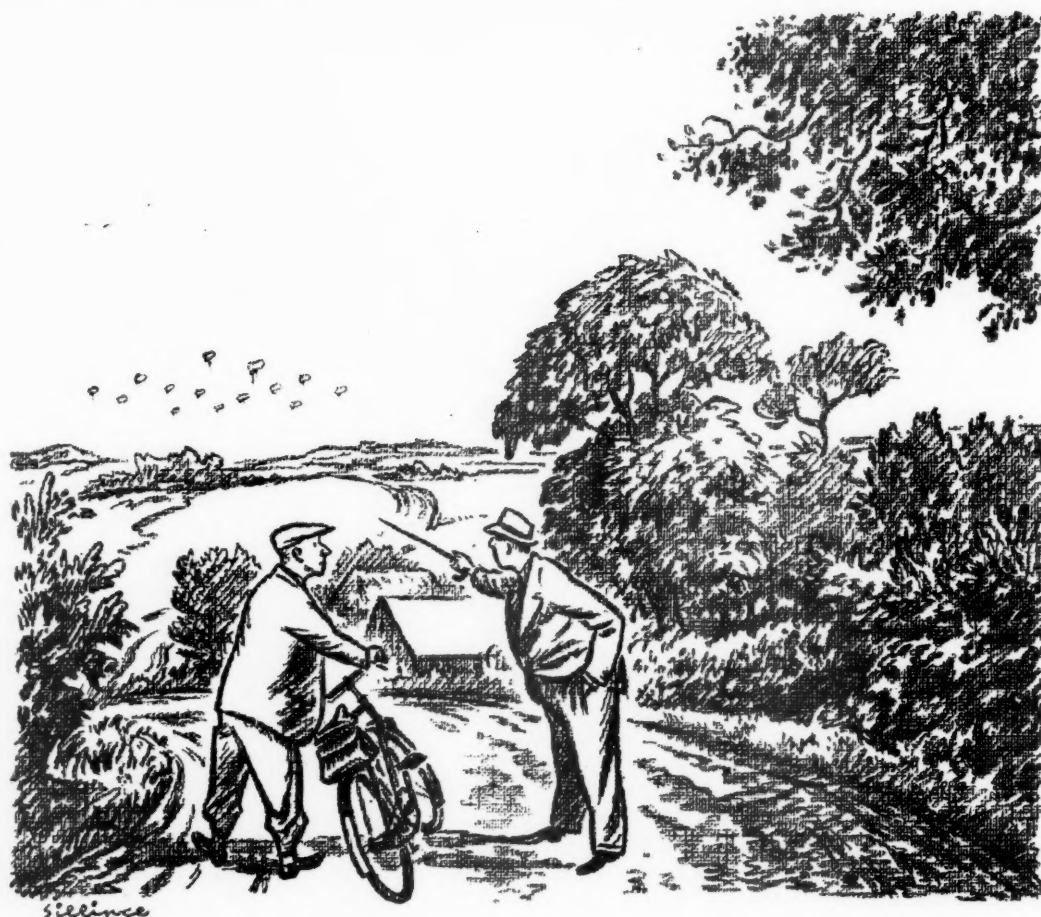
In vain did Lord HINCHINGBROOKE plead that the Navy had its pyjamas, and that the R.A.F. should not fare worse. "We," said Captain BALFOUR, "follow the Army, and sleep in our shirts."

Then Mr. GEORGE HICKS made a statement about loudspeakers in the Commons Chamber. He said it was proposed to try out loudspeakers in the east end of the Chamber, as well as in the west. In mentioning "east" he nodded confidently towards the *south*, and when he named the "west" he swung round and indicated the *north*. But nobody noticed.

There was a lot more talk about the pay-as-you-go income tax scheme, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer promised to "consider" its extension to all, and not merely those who are manual workers, or who get less than £600 a year.

*Thursday, October 21st.*—Their Lordships did not meet at all, and the Commons had nothing much to do, either. But it has not been a bad week's work.





*"Sharemouth? Over there, under the barrage balloons."*

### Field Notes

**E**VER since at the turn of the century a kind of aunt once removed gave me a coloured work on the tadpole's stomach I have been intending to be more observant of Nature. Events, however, have been implacably against me. Life is arranged like that for some of us. We are the men who have only to pause to drink in a sunset and a runaway steam-roller hits us in the back, to stoop to marvel at a jellyfish and a man we have never seen before appears beside us claiming to have shared a Bunsen with us in the Lower Fourth (Sc.).

There are more of us about than you would think. In time we get the

impression that Nature would prefer to get along without us. I always had a feeling, though, that one day she would warm to me, and this morning while Mrs. Amworthy was drawing my curtains I knew immediately that at last she was beckoning. It was a very beautiful awakening. But I am determined not to be carried away. I shall bring nothing but calm realism to the appraisal of Nature.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some time ago I met a man in a train who very plausibly propounded the theory that sound carried better in the presence of decaying vegetable matter, especially the brackens. Owing

to his having to leave the train rather hurriedly with two policemen, I cannot say in what manner he can have hoped to harness his discovery for the betterment of humanity, but this evening I went out to a large heath to see if he was right.

I persuaded George Bundridge, whose hearing seems average, to go about a mile away and start walking towards me. As soon as he heard my whistling he was to wave a white handkerchief. The heath was nearly flat except for a hillock to one side, but George, on leave from convoy patrol, steered so crooked a course that he was shortly lost to sight. This minor disaster was soon enough forgotten. At the

sound of my powerful, rhythmical whistling a large black dog the size of a bull calf leaped out of a wood at the edge of the heath and came charging down on me with the speed of a train. The animal's intentions appeared so unmistakably savage that I confess I stood rooted with the most vivid apprehension. A half-minute passed which was the equivalent of twenty years at the ordinary voltage, and then the creature made it clear that it had taken me for some great friend or relation. On arrival it behaved like a boxing kangaroo. I was completely winded, but at length convinced it that it had no special place in my affections, and it slunk away, I fear somewhat offended.

Though badly shaken I decided to carry on with the experiment. I had hardly begun whistling again, my rather personal tremolo whistle which I learned as long ago as Miss Bolingbroke's, when a soldier rose from the bracken at my feet and demanded to know what I thought I was doing. I explained as quickly as I could, mentioning but briefly the man in the train, and just adding that it was for science. "Rats," corrected the soldier. "No, science," I insisted, and left him, for he seemed a stupid sort of man. He appeared unconscious of a great smear of lipstick across his face, which bore a very comical aspect.

I began whistling again, but soon afterwards George Bundridge surmounted the hillock and began to wave a red handkerchief. As this formed no part of our code I resolved to suspend judgment on the theory until a more propitious day. When I came up to him George attempted to allay my rising choler by saying that a handkerchief was a handkerchief whatever its shade. The futility of this remark made me boil. I replied that this might well be true for nasal purposes, but that the demands of science were more rigid.

\* \* \* \* \*

A moth or butterfly of bomber type has settled on the wall above my bed, just below the ceiling. Nose upwards. It has folded its wings and retracted its undercarriage and has now been entirely stationary for a hundred and seven (107) hours. Mrs. Amworthy makes a jest of my careful timing of the phenomenon on the grounds that the creature has come for the winter. We shall see. The fuselage is a light dun and the wings are heavily camouflaged with a pretty orange and tomato motif. When it first arrived it was accompanied by a similar though smaller moth or butterfly which settled down beside it but then suddenly changed its mind and flew away. I

have given Mrs. Amworthy the strictest orders that the creature must on no account fall a victim to her occasional domestic frenzies and is to be considered under my personal protection.

The questions the professor in the train would have asked himself are, I am sure, the following:

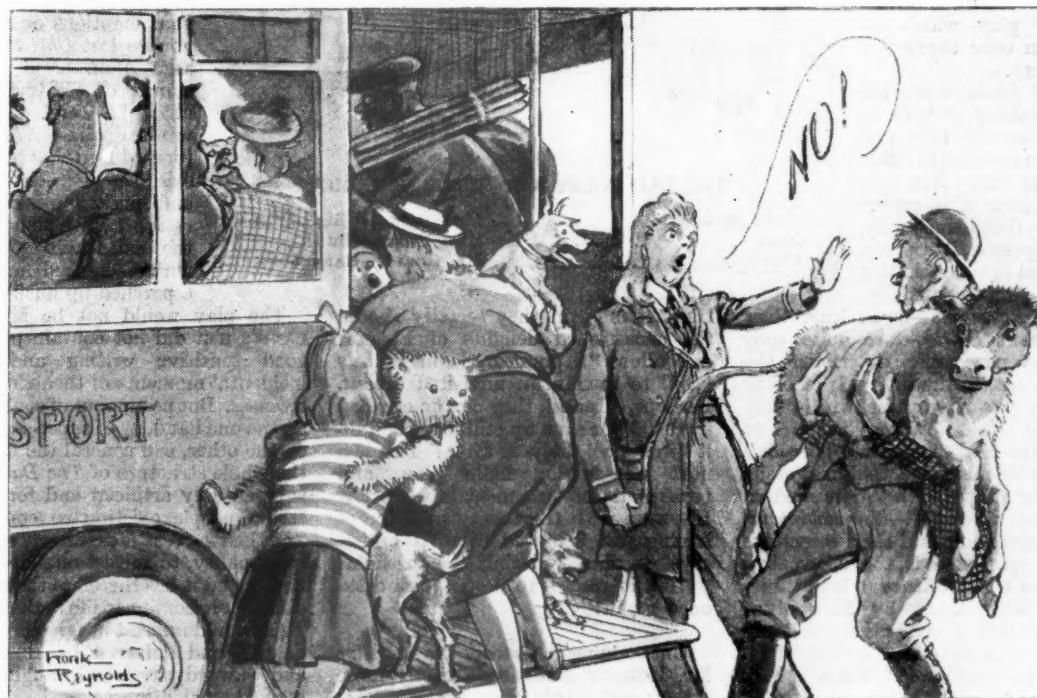
- (1) Is it a moth or a butterfly?
- (2) Is it just tired?
- (3) Is it perhaps dead?
- (4) Why should it have chosen my bedroom for whatever it is doing out of the many thousands within flying range?
- (5) Could its companion have been a pilot, hired for his knowledge of the safest routes to the most peaceful bedrooms?
- (6) Or was it its mate who, having been against the expedition from the very beginning, took advantage of an early quarrel to return home?

I hope my reading lamp will not disturb it at night. ERIC.

o o

"Before the war 4.8 people in this country had cars, but the roads were so crowded that a journey from Brighton to London on a Sunday evening took several hours."—*Sunday Paper*.

Inexplicably enough.



## At the Play

"ACACIA AVENUE" (VAUDEVILLE)  
"THE DARK RIVER" (WHITEHALL)

It may be said of the *Robinsons* of Acacia Avenue, as Jane said of the Musgroves in *Persuasion*, that they "were a very good sort of people—friendly and hospitable, not much educated, and not at all elegant; their children had more modern minds and manners." The authors, MABEL and DENIS CONSTANDUROS, gauge the social level of the *Robinsons* to a nicety, and as the heads of the family Mr. GORDON HARKER and Miss DOROTHY HAMILTON perfectly comply. "What I like about you, my dear," says *Charles Robinson* to his wife over supper, "is that you're not intelligent; I hate an intelligent woman." And *Mrs. Robinson*, beaming her gratification, says: "That was very sweet of you, my dear." It is exactly the ménage of Mr. Coward's *This Happy Breed*, but it would be wrong to say that *Acacia Avenue* derives from that or any other Cockney play. Rather let it be called the usual variant of the usual Cockney play which we are given once every five years or so.

*Acacia Avenue* snubs the war by taking us back to the summer of 1939 and having no mention of either politics or crises. The only news we hear of is, on the contrary, delightfully silly. A young person, it appears, is engaged in roller-skating from London to Salisbury, and the *Robinsons*—or at least their maidservant *Shirley*—are quite agog over the newspaper describing the achievement, in the intervals of being quite agog over a cruise which they (*Mr. and Mrs. Robinson*) propose to take in the Mediterranean. There are considerable misunderstandings among the young people with "more modern minds and manners"—the *Robinsons'* son and daughter and their respective sweethearts. There is, too, a revealing episode in which *Shirley* (a beautifully judged performance by Miss MEGS JENKINS) tells a sympathetic listener about the importunate wooing of an unseen pursuer called Fred. Miss JENKINS makes *Shirley* as warmly

alive as Arnold Bennett's *Elsie*, and—with her repeated "Fred said" this and "Fred said" that—contrives to make *Shirley's* not-to-be-denied adorer very nearly as actual.

But, these incidental things and performances apart, nothing can be said to happen in *Acacia Avenue*—not even the cruise. The *Robinsons* had never been abroad, and with a complicated mixture of alarm, economy, shyness, discretion, and the philosophy of "safety first," they resist it now and merely pretend to neighbours and children to have taken the trip. At



THE OLD FOLKS NOT QUITE AT HOME

Clara Robinson . . . . . MISS DOROTHY HAMILTON  
Joan . . . . . MISS YVONNE OWEN  
Charles Robinson . . . . . MR. GORDON HARKER

the last moment they secretly choose the accustomed delights of Bognor, and allow "a pumice isle in Baiae's bay" to remain an unvisited dream. Perhaps, after all, they can go cruising in 1940? Or save up still more and do it "in style" the year after? This is a neat unassuming little play, and perhaps its best moment is when Mr. HARKER, with the breezy pretence of having just achieved his first cruise, says to his welcoming household: "Well, it's noice to be on terra-cotta once again!"

Unassuming is scarcely the word for Mr. RODNEY ACKLAND's vastly more serious and subtle piece at the White-

hall. This has for its setting an old house in a Thames backwater, occupied by Age (a dotard in a bath-chair), Youth (a little boy playing at Red Indians), and Middle-Age (an eccentric lady who lost her son in the last war, hates the news and the newspapers, and has for slogan "Nature, music, beauty, art—that's what matters!"). Between them these three types might make, if not a play, at least a haunting short story by Mr. de la Mare. But Mr. ACKLAND's curtain is not long up before we realize that these three primary characters are a mere back-

ground to the tortuous story he prefers to concentrate upon—the tale of a young woman (drawn with exquisite care by Miss PEGGY ASHCROFT) who cannot decide to return to an already divorced husband (Mr. RONALD SIMPSON) or to fly from the past with a future-minded lover (Mr. MICHAEL GOLDEN) who foresees this World-War. These make an abnormally inter-introspective trio. They examine each other's hearts and souls in a way which in the theatre can so easily resolve itself into the merely tiresome. ("But, *Catherine*, are you sure you're not making me a peg to hang your emotions on because you've lost *Christopher*?" asks *Alan*. And at this climax of self-torture we must be forgiven if we wished that *Alan* had jumped into that punt outside the French-window and pushed off never to return.) Push off he does in the end, leaving *Catherine* with a cracked heart and a patched-up husband.

The play would not be Mr. ACKLAND's if it did not contain plenty of good sensitive writing and many incidental moments of theatrical effectiveness. But no amount of contrivance on the one hand, or of super-sensibility on the other, can conceal the fact that the whole structure of *The Dark River* is essentially artificial and forced. A set of people existing so completely "on their nerves" is extremely unlikely, in actuality, to subsist outside a madhouse, and it has therefore the greatest difficulty in coming to life in the theatre. They would interest us far more if they queried and quivered less insistently and yawned, stretched, laughed, and relaxed much oftener. A. D.



## Basic Verse

WE should have thought, if they must have a new form of English, fit for the student and the foreigner, the courteous and practical thing would have been to adopt Haddock English. But let that pass.

Here is Basic in the news again: and we are not among those who must instinctively tread upon any new thing, as if it were an ugly new insect. We were somewhat impressed by the English general we met who, by order, had learned Basic and taught it to some Indian troops. They came on much quicker, he said, than Indian troops who had been scrabbling about in the usual way for a longer time.

You may ask "Where did they stop?" and there are other questions. First, we hope that the list of Basic Words (850) is not finally closed, and we see no reason why it should be. For there are some startling gaps.

We tried, for example, to put the National Anthem into Basic; but we were halted at the first line.

There is no word "God" in Basic; there is no word "king" (this is the more surprising when you see, at the bottom of the page of permitted words, that the home-address of "Basic" is King's Parade, Cambridge); there is no "gracious" ("kind" is about the nearest); and there is no verb "to save." The best we could do was something about:

"Make safe the ruler of our land,"

and the only Basic rhymes to land are "band," "hand" and "sand."

Nor, by the way, can you say "His Majesty's Government." That might not worry the Indian troops: but I am sure they would like to see "king" in the supplementary list.

The absence of "shall" has been harshly commented upon elsewhere, and we agree. To teach people that "will" is the same as "shall" is to teach illiteracy. It makes, as somebody well said in *The Times*, the Ten Commandments too optimistic; and it makes, as Beachcomber said, "*ils ne passeront pas*" mere prophecy.

And surely "must"—the strong simple "must" which, after all, is the basis of most of our life—should be among the "operator" words. To say "must" in Basic you must say "it is necessary." We, no doubt, could say "I have to," but that is an idiom that would puzzle the Indian troops. And we should have thought that "brave" might have earned a place (we are thinking, again, of the Indian troops). The nearest that we can find is "unfearing." And we must—it is necessary for us to say that we should like to see "nasty" and "nice."

But we acknowledge the labours and the difficulties of the authors; and all this is in the nature of a benevolent Second Reading speech promising a close examination in Committee. It is not a hostile speech upon Third Reading. Indeed, our main purpose here is to meet a challenge we received to write a poem in Basic English. Here it is.

We have done our best to keep to the rules: and, if we have not, there has been no deliberate cheating:

Basic, as far as I can see,  
Is not a form design-ed for me;  
But I would say kind words about  
The learn-ed man who work-ed it out.  
Though it is true much good thought goes  
Quite smooth-ly into Basic Prose,  
It is a tongue too tight, or worse,  
To be the instrument of Verse.  
It is not possible to put  
Out-side the soup the certain foot,

If at the top-note of the song  
The word that would be right is wrong.  
And even when a word will do  
That is, by chance, in Basic too  
It's such a business look-ing round  
For words that have the self-same sound.<sup>1</sup>  
Nine hundred words is all there are,  
Which, in such work, does not go far;  
Though, when at last one does the trick,  
I have to say one gets a kick.<sup>2</sup>  
But this, like-wise, is hard on me—  
There are no verbs in Basic E.  
Well, there are "come," and "keep," and "make,"  
"Get," "go," "give," "let," "put," "seem," and "take,"  
"Be," "do," "have," "see," and, yes, my friend,  
You may make use of "say" and "send."  
It is not quite so bad as this.  
There is, they say, no verb "to kiss";  
But "kiss" is on the Basic list—  
Put "-ed" at end, and you have "kiss-ed."  
You may put "-er"; you may put "-ing,"  
Which makes a sort of verb-like thing,  
And though it has a different name  
It seems to come to much the same.

Well, hav-ing done what was desir-ed,  
I say quite open-ly "I'm tired."  
It will be long before my brain  
Is put to such a use again;  
But may you be in better heart  
For hav-ing seen this work of art!  
And I am happy at the thought  
That some whose parallel is 0,<sup>3</sup>  
And some in structures made of snow  
Who can not make the roundest O,  
In the Beyond that has no back,  
Where every-one is brown or black,  
Will now<sup>4</sup> be reading all these rules  
And tak-ing Honours in the Schools.

A. P. H.

## An Airman

HE played with Death, enticed him with a kiss,  
Dared him with deeds, pursued him with a star;  
But Death, who never had been wooed like this,  
Remained aloof, afar.

With spurt and gleam, with brightness like the sun's,  
He circled Death as with a wheel of flame;  
But Death, capricious, sought those other ones  
That had not called his name.

\* \* \* \* \*

He mocked at Death, pursued him into hell,  
Mocked him afresh, then crashed to burning space;  
But Death, grown gentle, caught him as he fell,  
Nor let him see his face.

<sup>1</sup> There is no "rhyme."

<sup>2</sup> Yes, this line is well within the rules. How you explain it to the Indian troops is another thing.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. latitude 0°—on the Equator. Clever, eh?

<sup>4</sup> There is no "soon."



"One slightly uncomfortable single seat."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### William Plomer

THE interest of Mr. WILLIAM PLOMER's account of his first twenty-five years (*Double Lives*. CAPE, 9/6) mounts from a low level, with occasional backward lapses. Dividing his narrative into three parts, Mr. PLOMER devotes the first part, which he entitles "Prenatal," to a long account of his forbears on both sides. It is natural that a man should be interested in his ancestors, without whose co-operation he would not have come into existence, but the reader of an autobiography may reasonably expect that the attention he is prepared to devote to the autobiographer should not be stretched to include selected kinsmen, authentic or hypothetical, back to Saxon times. However, WILLIAM PLOMER emerges at last, in the Northern Transvaal at a place called Louis Trichardt, where at night he could hear lions roaring far off or the nearer howling of jackals, "more sad and wonderful than frightening," and where one very dry summer the veldt caught fire, and the flames roared all round the house, and "suddenly a man on horseback burst magically through the curtains of flame." The narrative, vivid while he is in South Africa, becomes flat once more when he is sent to school in England. His preparatory school is severely dealt with, Rugby is let off more lightly, with a word of special commendation for the headmaster, but, in conformity with the modern fashion, he represents himself as filled with a nostalgia towards the working class—"I had never ceased to feel attracted by working people, their physical dignity, good sense and free and natural manners." Back again in South Africa, he wrote his first novel, *Turbott Wolfe*, the hero of which is an Englishman who becomes a negrophile and encourages miscegenation. The leading South African newspapers were not attracted either by the theme of the novel or its style. "Gone are the days of *Jock of the Bushveld* and *Rider Haggard*!" one reviewer cried, and the *Zululand Times* complained that the book was not cricket. From South Africa, at twenty-two, Mr. PLOMER went to Japan, with which country the third and most interesting part of

his autobiography is concerned. He had, he says, a happy sense of community with the Japanese; and after he had grown used to the stylized Japanese face, the mongrel features of Europeans looked irregular to him, their manners seemed uncouth, their voices too loud, and their opinions too outspoken. He recognizes, however, that he was wise to leave Japan before it became militarized, and even when he was there he felt the presence of the forces which since then have taken control. H. K.

### "Lots of Things Besides"

When a biographer who has made his or her name at one *métier* chooses a subject who has attained distinction at another, there is a danger that those who are interested in the theme are not necessarily interested in the writer—and vice versa. Miss MARGUERITE STEEN's portrait of William Nicholson (COLLINS, 16/-) will, one feels, prove more attractive to the author's admirers than to the artist's; for in spite of an initial protestation that the book concerns "a very simple person whose language is his brush," the biography's professional keel is so encrusted with domestic and social barnacles that progress—as an amateur of art would understand it—is difficult. You do learn that Nicholson got the red, black and off-white of his predilection at three removes direct from Reynolds; that he never saw a wood-block cut till he cut one himself; that he lost time under Herkomer and made it up at Julian's. But as the story goes on, technical problems are apt to be crowded out. That so much fine work—from the simple impressionism of the Dieppe "First Communion" to the almost Pre-Raphaelite irony of "Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb"—was done in adverse circumstances confirms the animation and tenacity two photographs of Nicholson himself suggest. H. P. E.

### Saroyana

MR. WILLIAM SAROYAN's many admirers in this country won't be disappointed with his first novel, *The Human Comedy* (FABER, 8/6). Nor will the large number of people who cannot stand him at any price. But those (and after all there are a good many of them too) who have never read anything he has written may ask a few questions. For instance, who is he? Well, WILLIAM SAROYAN is a young Armenian writer who has battered his way—at one time he sent a story a day to *Esquire* and had every one of them rejected—right into the holy of holies of American fiction. Then, didn't Balzac use the title "The Human Comedy" some time ago? And isn't it rather rash to invite a comparison? It may be, but a thing like that isn't likely to worry WILLIAM SAROYAN. This is *his* Human Comedy. It is about a poor but honest family, the *Macaulays*, living on Santa Clara Avenue, Ithaca, California; the eldest boy, *Marcus*, away with the Army; his mother; his sister *Bess*; his brother *Homer* the telegraph boy; little *Ulysses*, aged four; the girl next door; the school-teacher; the Armenian grocer, and kindly drunken old *Mr. Grogan* at the post office. But why Ithaca, why Homer and Ulysses? Well, this question is asked in the book itself, and the answer given is: "Why don't you go home, Willie?" But is that relevant? No, because SAROYAN's is a genius that rambles, or rather overflows. The mystery of what he calls "this strange, weed-infested, junky, wonderful, senseless yet beautiful world" intoxicates him, urging him on, inimitable and unstoppable, eccentric and tearful, given to long soliloquies on love and pain and innocence. But isn't it all rather sentimental? Sometimes oppressively so. The inhabitants of Ithaca are all inordinately good. They smile

wisely, give away money to burglars, and love their enemies—but oddly enough they are real and human—WILLIAM SAROYAN's great discovery being that people, on the whole, have kind hearts. The chances are that he will make you laugh and cry when he wants to. Or he may annoy you very much. But neither that nor anything else will stop his endless flow of words.

P. M. F.

### L'art d'être Grand'mère

"More tenderly yours than words can express, S. Marlborough"... so the Duchess Sarah to the only woman with whom she never quarrelled, her granddaughter Diana. "Poor dear little Dye," bequeathed aged six to her grandmother, became the prime confidante and interest of the dowager's old age; and *Letters of a Grandmother, 1732-1735* (CAPE, 10/6), admirably edited by Miss GLADYS SCOTT THOMSON, display every phase of the Duchess of Marlborough's designs and doings, with a truly grandmaternal solicitude for those of the Duchess of Bedford. Their appeal is not historical. It is not even scandalous; though one comic misadventure to Queen Caroline is noted as worthy of a ballad. Sarah had the sense—so invaluable in a woman—of throwing her weight where it was effective. She built, she furnished, she designed gardens. Travelling to Scarborough to take the waters—Scarborough was "as dirty as Hanover"—she had herself carried critically round Woburn Abbey in a pole chair. Thinking possibly of Vanbrugh and Blenheim, she bade Diana beware of architects. One got the best results by employing one's own workmen. Diana's inheritance is ever in her mind; and when Diana dies, aged twenty-five, a last acrimonious letter demands Marlborough's field-tent and a quantity of Churchill jewels from Diana's reluctant widower.

H. P. E.

### Disraeli and Others

It is a pity that authors nowadays should feel compelled to link their books in one way or another with the war effort. In a preface to *The Perfect Age* (MACDONALD, 10/6) Mr. F. E. BAILY says that, bearing in mind the stress and perils of our age, he has tried to find in our history "the perfect mother, father, husband, wife, sister and brother, whose behaviour might be an example to the parents, husbands, wives, sisters and brothers of our own time." To claim so exalted a purpose for these pleasant readable sketches is to expose them to a more searching criticism than they can easily sustain. Lord Melbourne, for instance, whom Mr. BAILY presents as the perfect husband, was twice cited as a co-respondent; his wife had numerous affairs, and of their three children one was mentally deficient, one died young, and one was still-born. If, however, one forgets Mr. BAILY's alleged purpose, one may find plenty of entertainment in his somewhat rambling narratives. He is at his best in his account of the youthful Disraeli touring the Near East with a friend called Meredith, who was engaged to Disraeli's sister, Sarah. Byron had not long been dead, the romantic age was still in full flower, and the future leader of the Conservative party called on a Grand Vizier in a red shirt with silver studs as large as sixpences, green pantaloons with a velvet stripe down the sides, a silk Albanian shawl and a jacket festooned with ribbons. At this date he was still capable of intense feeling, and when Meredith died of small-pox in Cairo, he wrote a very moving letter to the elder Disraeli—"Our innocent lamb, our angel is stricken. Save her, save her. . . . I wish to live only for my sister. I think of her all day and all night." Henceforth Sarah lived only for him, and

had the happiness of surviving till he became Chancellor of the Exchequer for the second time. To balance Sarah Disraeli as a perfect sister, Mr. BAILY has chosen Charles Lamb as a perfect brother. Lamb is out of fashion at present; he was not an ideologist nor did he attempt to link his essays with the war effort against Napoleon. No experienced journalist, Mr. BAILY says, would be rash enough to submit the *Essays of Elia* to editors to-day. Oppressed by this reflection, he does not make much of Lamb even as a human being.

H. K.

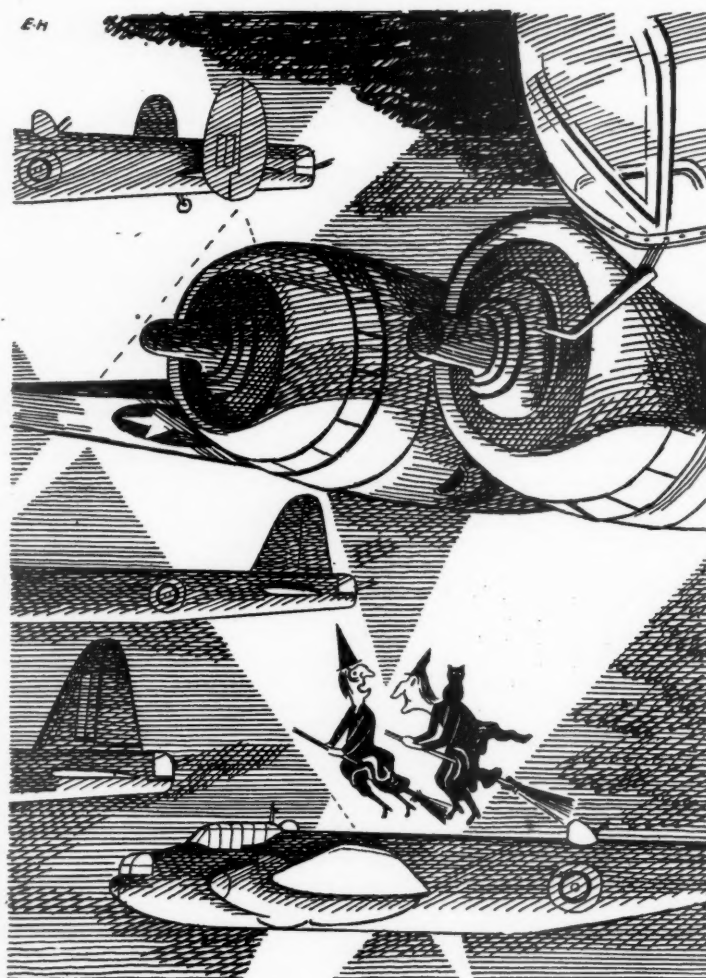
### The Back Streets of London

*None but the Lonely Heart* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 10/6) is the tale of a lad who drifts into crime—a tale the effects of which the reader can hardly throw off when he comes up, reluctantly, for food and air. There have been studies of this kind before, but Mr. RICHARD LLEWELLYN's has a fundamental difference. Here, one is ready to believe, is life in London as it might seem to *Ernie Mott* and not to the intelligent probation officer. *Ernie Mott* is not yet twenty. A mixture of humility and boastfulness, he is attracted by the notion of becoming "an artist," but he learns very soon that it is easier and more profitable to steal, and equally satisfying to childish vanity. His decline is gradual but, in the circumstances, inevitable: an impressionable youth responds to the nearest insistent suggestion that is accompanied with money and physical comfort. *Ernie* is not the whole of this book. Mr. LLEWELLYN has also provided a streetful of urban villagers, a band of eccentric tramps in the most florid tradition of nineteenth-century fiction, a horrible journey along a London sewer, and a school for smash-and-grab. The horrors are relieved and set off by clear unsentimental sketches of home life in the back streets—sketches it never occurs to one to dispute.

J. S.







"Not much privacy these nights!"

## More Collected Essays of J. Pope Clugston

### BRAVE NEW WORD

IN describing the versatility of a well-known Commando leader, my newspaper<sup>1</sup> calls him "the very champeleon of the services." I suppose they mean *chameleon*, which is not a very good word, with its hint of inconstancy; the chameleon is a turncoat, I think. But *champeleon* is an excellent word, conveying as it does the idea of *champion* and *Napoleon*. It is a very champeleon of a word.

<sup>1</sup> Originals may be inspected, etc. At your own expense, naturally.

### CYNICISM

This same newspaper<sup>1</sup> contains an advertisement inserted by a man who says he wants to meet a woman of "approximate intelligence." A cynic might tell him they are all like that, but I wouldn't tell him such a thing; my wife and my conscience won't let me. Of course a cynic might tell me that my wife and my conscience are the same thing.

### NOVELS

When you reach, as we all do, that time of life where you decide to write a

novel, I do beg and implore you to remember that your friends are not going to like it. Half of them will complain that it is too much like yourself, and half will complain that it really isn't a bit like you. This, mind you, is quite apart from the friends and strangers who complain that it isn't the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In spite of these grave considerations, I myself have decided to write a novel because I am thoroughly annoyed and fed up with Miss Hazel Grith's new work, *Fatgoose Farm*, and having said I could do better myself I am now going to do so. The trouble with Miss Grith is that when she tries to describe the lavish food and drink at Fatgoose Farm in the 1840's, she doesn't tell you *what* they ate and drank; in other words, she fails to describe them at all. Now this is mere waste. If you are going to have people eating and drinking on such a scale (and by all means let us have them, so that we can live in a dream-world of gluttony for an hour or two), you must tell us *all*, dish by dish and glass by glass. I do not suppose Miss Grith would care to deny the greatness of *Pickwick*. Well, we always know what both Samuels, Pickwick and Weller, are eating and drinking. Particularly what they are drinking. I think I must have eaten and drunk my way through *Pickwick* a dozen times, yet it can still make me hungry and thirsty in an enjoyably wistful way. Miss Grith, however, refuses to invite me to the table. She indicates vaguely that there is plenty of good stuff going round, both solid and liquid, but she won't let me at it.

### THE IRISH

In discussing her race the other day, my Irish aunt informed me that the only trouble with her countrymen is that they are just a little too human. This remark, I take it, is typically Irish . . . she has got the whole thing twisted upside-down. The truth is, of course, that the only trouble with the human race is that it is too Irish.

### MISS GRITH AGAIN

When I spoke of Miss Grith just now, I wasn't using her real name. (Her real name is Hazel Harbinger.) I just got the word *grith* out of the dictionary by prōdding round at random among the GR's, where I find so much treasure. Where else but among the GR's would you find such words as grobian, groof, grivet, grizelin, groogroo, and gride? Not that the SM's aren't satisfactory enough in their own way.

## PLEASURES

It was Mr. W. H. Davies (wasn't it?) who had such a good time when he heard a cuckoo and saw a rainbow simultaneously. "How rich and great the times are now!" he sang. To-day I have had a richer time. My cup runneth over. First of all, I found the dictionary agreeing with one of my fads, which is always a keen pleasure. Then I managed to forgive my Cousin Aubrey for something, which annoyed him very much; as Sir Thos. Browne says, forgiving your enemies is a charming revenge. Then I suddenly discovered I was honest, which is always as pleasant as it is surprising; I have never stolen anything in my life, but since I never know when I may begin, I always feel astonished and proud when I hand back a golf-ball or a box of matches or the money a shopkeeper has given me by mistake. And then, just now, I found no moth in my trousers after feeling pretty sure they'd be simply riddled. It isn't often you get a day like that. As Mr. Davies says, it may never come this side of the tomb.

## ANIMAL-LOVERS

This same Cousin Aubrey informs me that people who like animals are silly. I have never given the matter my undivided attention, but off-hand I'd say he's probably right, in spite of his remark being most un-English. (The fact that a remark is un-English is never final proof that it is wrong; the English often overlook this. On the other hand, of course, it is never final proof that it is right; foreigners often overlook this.) People who like animals are often very silly indeed . . . nearly as silly as people who don't like animals.

## WHIRLING

My wife is continually whirling about the house in the performance of little tasks which seem to me unnecessary. She explains all this whirling by the fact that she is unable to find a servant; through lack of a servant she must whirl herself. But surely there is a fallacy here. Even if we had a servant, we couldn't make her whirl. That, indeed, was the big difference between Lily, our last maid, and the lilies of the field. Lily toiled, in a sense, but she wouldn't spin; she was a fixed object.

## THEORY AND PRACTICE

My Uncle Cedric, as a missionary, is an expert on forgiveness. Yet can he forgive me for being myself? No, sir, he cannot. This just shows you how these experts break down on a simple little practical job.

## Lovers' Lane

IT was a twisty thoroughfare with a fringed, woodland aspect. Thick hedges of hawthorn flanked it, and the boughs of an occasional chestnut or sycamore draped romantically across. In the Edwardian years plebeian Slagworth left the smoke to woo there; winter or summer, wet or fine, in overcoats, light frocks or umbrellas. They said it was necessary since you invariably lived in a two up and down. And although father and mother were now and then prepared to sit in the scullery-kitchen on a Sunday evening with the sloopstone and the mangle and the rest of the children, the parlour, with its pampas grass and green plush, had been hermetically sealed all week, and even the new-lit fire failed to dispel an odour suggesting that someone had recently been embalmed. So you strolled down Lovers' Lane.

On summer evenings it was relatively beautiful. When the sun had gone down and twilight bloom softened the distant chimney stacks, and pink and white hawthorn blossom abounded, some atavistic memory from the golden age twanged. At least, such seemed to be responsible for the gist of Tom Lee's whisperings to Maggie. Instead of saying that she was his little oodly-woodlum he murmured of places without factory chimneys, where

the blossom kept clean from bud to decay. He animadverted vehemently against his environment. Contrariwise he adumbrated that there were parts of the country unbesmirched by smoke; where the sky was like crystal and red-flanked cattle, birds, grasses and flowers were all in their freshest hues and not looking as though seen through smoked glass.

Maggie's eyes were shining when she reached home that night.

"E's a pote," she explained to her parents.

"It'll dee out," said her father, winding the alarm-clock for next morning.

"What wilt 'ave for thi supper," her mother inquired, "a beef sandwidge or a piece o' fatty cake?"

On winter nights the hedges were spiky silhouettes, darkly outlined. Clouds trailed their ragged skirts across the moon. The couples huddled closer together. Tom's arms were round Maggie. The mood was on him again. The only thing to do was to get away from it all; from the gusts of steam hissing from pipes in mill walls, the fetid stench from dye-house settling tanks, the rancid odour of oily waste and the eternal ashes and soot. Elsewhere there were streams alive with trout, tumbling between heather-



Starks

covered hills. Miles away a twirl of blue smoke rose from the chimney of a whitewashed cottage. Diving birds slipped into the heavy green of the loch. The firs rose in tiers, like many-barbed arrows. Autumn brought a carpet of gold. The air was exhilarating and you awoke in the mornings heavy with sleep.

Maggie rumbled his hair. Then she put her bonny, common-sense face close to his ear.

"About that there, luv," she whispered, "will it mean more money?"

"Course it will," announced Tom, crashing from sublimity. "It'll mean I'm tackling, not just weaving—tackling!"

The sternest frost failed to depopulate the lane. Noses and ears might be like icicles, and feet in another world, but there was rarely a nook unoccupied. Love cancels numbness. The period held the last of those winters which delighted the old men when they were lads, and are now no more. And when ice on the mill lodge was never less than a yard thick and even the gas in the pipes was frozen; and progress along the streets was difficult owing to snow pads encumbering your clogs, and the margarine was hard in the pot, and old coats had to be piled on the bed-clothes, then a good idea was to escape with your thoughts. In any case that was Tom Lee's formula, fired by which particular book he happened to be reading. There were

climates favourable to oleander, lotus and magnolia. Sunsets flamed. There were bazaars, minarets and temple bells. White palaces gleamed against skies of unbelievable blue. The rhododendrons above Darjeeling. . . .

Undoubtedly he was out of the ruck and Maggie suddenly hugged him, while on her lips, in the darkness, was a tiny sibylline smile, faintly sad.

Slagworth began another of its sprawls just after the 1914-18 war. It did not proceed direct to the lane, somehow it seemed reluctant, it thrust arms up the sides of it and round the back, like the tide investing a sand-bank. Areas of turf were cut in neighbouring fields and soon the builder's vehicles were unloading sand, bricks, doorways, window-frames, and huge notices practically offering a deposit to those who would buy the houses once they were erected. Lime pits were dug, braziers lit and the grasses and clover trampled into a hotch-potch of mud. Finally the sprawl touched the lane. Progress wreaked from either end. Teams of horses dragged away the chestnuts and sycamores. The larks and hedge-sparrows disappeared—but not the lovers, the lane grew shorter and shorter but they persisted. Towards the end they were almost jammed into one solid cluster, but the day came when they were ousted. The last vestiges were banished. The builder seemed to gird himself and then, with

virtually the speed of an accelerated film, row after row of small uniform houses flew together.

To-day the lane lives only in commemoration. The speculative builder did his worst, but at least he named one of the streets after the former site. Strangers proceeding along Lovers' Lane sometimes wince at the utter incongruity of the title. All they see is a straight-ruled nightmare. At the moment cards dangling in various windows bearing such inscriptions as "Air-Raid Warden," "W.V.S." and "Stirrup Pump Here," have replaced those that used to read, "Cornet Taught," or "Hen Fat For Sale." Mainly the interiors of the houses are aggressively clean, it is the exteriors that are appalling; cracked concrete paths, hoary stucco and brickwork that has departed from its pristine hue of spam for a sooty red. That is Lovers' Lane to-day. Most of the young folk are in the Forces; the rest are in the war factories and these in addition to the middle-aged and an incorrigible creaking of the old. Tom and Maggie Lee live about half-way down.

o o

#### Lay of the Last Host

I'm no escapist or recluse,  
I am not hermit, that is plain.  
I put my Hermitage to use  
And it escaped and I remain.



"I missed the swimming course, Sergeant."

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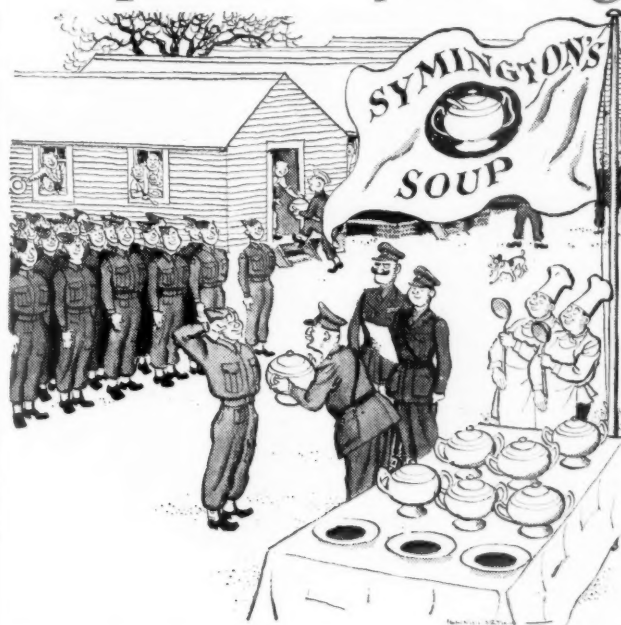
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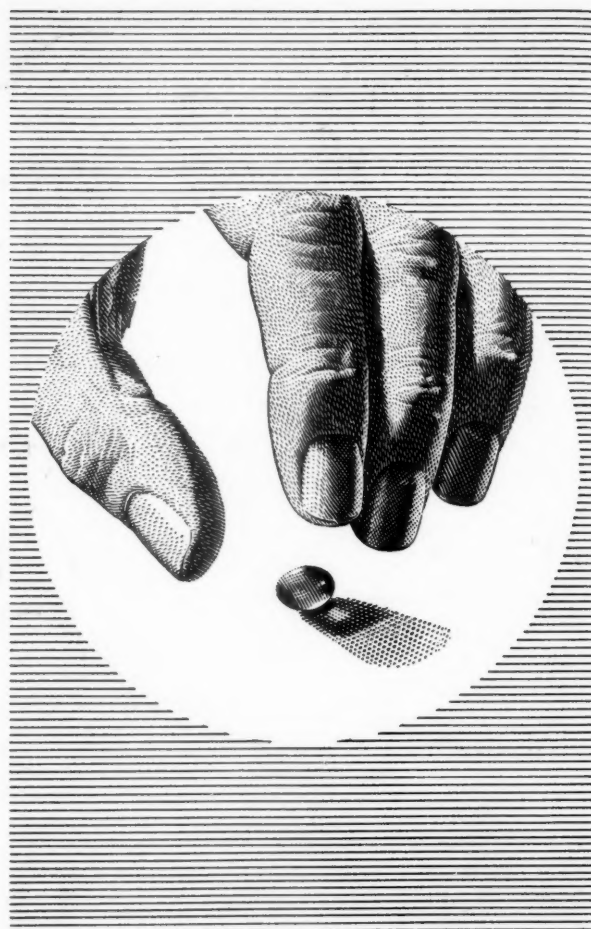
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